

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT**

SCHOOL CENSUS

2008

2008 School Census

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VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT 2008 SCHOOL CENSUS

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE 2008 SCHOOL CENSUS

December 14, 2007	Administrative Supts. Memo. No. 53 announcing the census collection for 2008
January 1, 2008	Commence Census
July 15, 2008	Complete Census
August 15, 2008	Report Data to Department of Education
September 15, 2008	Department of Education Completes Verification
October 1, 2008	Counts for Distribution of State Sales Tax Given to Department of Education Budget Office

COMPLETING THE 2008 SCHOOL CENSUS

- A. January 1, 2008 through August 15, 2008 is designated as the period during which the 2008 school census will be conducted and completed.
- B. Include in the school census all persons residing in the county, city, or town who will have reached or passed their fifth birthday on December 31, 2008 and who will not have reached their twentieth birthday on December 31, 2008.

Persons who are domiciled in orphanages or charitable institutions or who are dependents living on any federal military or naval reservation or other federal property shall be included in the census for the school division within which the institutions or federal military or naval reservation or other federal property is located.

Persons who are confined in State hospitals, State training schools or State training centers for the mentally retarded, or mental institutions, State or federal correctional institutions, the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind at Hampton or

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the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind at Staunton shall be included in the census for the school division within which the parents or guardians of such persons legally reside.

- C. Provisions must be made so that a census of the children who reside in an incorporated town may be tabulated. Distribution of State sales tax and/or the local sales tax is dependent upon the ratio of the school age population of each incorporated town to the school age population of the entire county in which the town is located (See Section 58.1-605, Paragraph G and H and Section 58.1-638, Paragraph D, Code of Virginia). Please note that while separate census totals are required for each incorporated town, only the two towns of Colonial Beach and West Point are required to file census returns with the Department of Education, since they constitute separate school divisions.
- D. The process for conducting the census can be done in a variety of ways: survey mailings, the door-to-door enumeration, data abstracted from school division's and private school's databases, or a combination of these.
- E. A school division may use the enumeration form provided on the Department of Education's web site for taking the census or design a form of its own.
- F. Enumeration forms are not to be returned to the Department of Education. The forms should be filed in an appropriate order in the division superintendent's office so that they may be conveniently referenced, if necessary. They must be kept for a period of three years from the end of the fiscal year in which the last entry was made, or until audited, whichever comes first, after which they may be destroyed.

REPORTING CENSUS DATA TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- A. School divisions should report ONLY the total count of all persons ages 5-19.
- B. This count must be received by the Department of Education on or before August 15, 2008.
- C. The Department of Education will verify counts with division superintendents.

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CONDUCTING THE SCHOOL CENSUS

Introduction

While the Triennial School Census has always been important demographic information for planning and other purposes, the advent of the state sales tax, of which one percent is distributed to the localities on the basis of the school census data, has made an accurate school census imperative for each locality to receive its equitable share of this money. See Appendix B for a copy of the state statutes relating to the school census.

School Census Planning

While the division superintendent is responsible for the school census, it is customary for the superintendent to appoint someone to be in charge. For consistency throughout these procedures, this person will be called the census director.

After appointment, the census director, in cooperation with the division superintendent, should prepare a budget and tentative schedule for the school census.

A major cost factor of the school census is the expense of postage, enumerators (if used) and clerical help employed to edit and tabulate the results. If enumerators will be used, a decision must be made concerning the basis on which they will be paid (e.g., per name of child, per housing unit, travel expenses) and how much they will be paid per pay unit.

Decisions also must be made with regard to several factors concerning how the school census will be conducted. Among these are:

- A. Whether survey mailings, existing databases or enumerators will be used to conduct the census.
- B. Whether the Department of Education enumeration form or a locally designed form will be used.

Selection of Personnel

Director of School Census – The person responsible for the school census should be appointed by the school board on the recommendation of the division superintendent, to act as an agent for the school board, in compliance with Section 22.1-282 of the Code of Virginia. The agent appointed might be (1) a person already under full or part-time contract in the school division; (2) a private corporation that specializes in conducting a census; (3) any other person considered by the division superintendent to be qualified for this task.

The census director should be: (1) thoroughly familiar with school law as it relates to the

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school census; (2) thoroughly familiar with the geographic areas to be covered by the school census; (3) competently trained in organization and administration of a school census; (4) prepared to provide training sessions for the division census enumerators; and (5) prepared to provide adequate help and sufficient time to complete the school census.

Enumerators – If school census enumerators are used, they should be carefully selected. These personnel are responsible for conducting thorough and accurate counts. School divisions should give careful consideration to the qualifications needed for employment as enumerators and to the various local opportunities that may exist for recruiting suitable people. School division bus drivers, clerical staff and aides have proven to be valuable enumerators.

Organizing and Conducting the School Census

A. Listing of all Households and Institutions in the Locality for the Census

It is important to identify all households in the county, city or town for taking the census counts. Counties, cities, and towns may be divided into areas, zones or tracts to which mailings or enumerators will be assigned to take the school census. In some instances, it may prove helpful to work with other units of the local government such as planning commissions, zoning boards, utility departments and local tax authorities.

The following are some methods of division that can be used: (1) utilizing a census tract number, block number, and parcel number (similar to U.S. Census); (2) elementary or other type school zones; (3) magisterial district or other local government division; (4) by utilization of natural boundaries, roads, and subdivision; (5) and 911 Emergency System.

The school census director should make arrangements with the appropriate authorities for taking the school census in orphanages or charitable institutions or on any federal military reservation or other federal property located within the county, city, or town.

With respect to the school census on federal military reservations, dependents of personnel living on military reservations are to be included in the school census for the county, city, or town within which the military reservation is located. Members of the military services who are under 20 years of age are to be included in the school census for the county, city, or town that is the legal residence of their parents or guardians.

Attention is called to the situation that in any county wherein is situated any incorporated town, provision must be made for obtaining a census of the children who reside in any such towns, inasmuch as the distribution of the State sales tax and/or the local sales tax is dependent upon the ratio of the school age population of the town to the school age population of the entire county. However, census data

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must be reported as separate counts to the Department of Education only for the towns that constitute separate school divisions.

B. Conducting a Pre-Census Count

A pre-census count is a preliminary survey of the in-school population that can provide the school census director advance information that can be useful in planning and as a check against the actual census to make certain that all housing units have been visited and all children in school are listed.

The pre-census count can be obtained from an existing student information database of the in-school population or requested by form.

The pre-census survey is filled out in advance of the actual school census. Sufficient time must be allowed for the forms to be organized and filed. Each child in school fills out a form listing items such as his or her name, age, or date of birth, address, and parents' or guardians' names and addresses, and the names of all other children in the family ages 5-19. Other items of information may be added as needed. Each teacher who is responsible for attendance accounting should see that each student completes one of the pre-census forms.

When completed, the forms are organized according to the needs of the local school census plan. For example, they could be sorted by street, and then checked against a directory of the county, city, and town such as the 911 Emergency System. For each directory listing for which there is no pre-census questionnaire, a form listing the street and house number is inserted. This file provides a complete list of residences for each street as well as numerical counts of housing units and children that can be used in assigning enumerators. When the actual school census forms are completed, they are filed in the same manner and checked against the pre-census file.

It is also important to keep a record of all pupils who enter or withdraw from school after the pre-census forms have been initially completed. This can be done by having the principal of each school make certain that a form is completed and forwarded to the school census director when a child registers to enter school or when he or she withdraws from school.

An inherent weakness of the pre-census in-school count is that it does not account for families with children not attending public schools, such as children who have not started school, those who have graduated or dropped out, and those who are attending non-public schools (private, parochial, schools on military reservations). Non-public schools may cooperate in providing this information if requested.

C. Publicity

Adequate publicity is important in obtaining a satisfactory school census. The

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community should be informed during the school year of the local school division's plans for conducting the school census as well as its purpose and value. Subsequently the local school division could publicize the school census in several ways:

- a memorandum to each housing unit in the county, city, or town stating the background and need for the school census, the dates when the school census and follow up will be conducted locally, and a list of items to be completed on the school census;
- a release in the newspapers with a copy of the actual form;
- releases over radio and/or television;
- a listing on the school division's Web site.

D. Conducting the School Census

Within the period specified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the locality decides when it will conduct the school census. Conducting the school census before the end of the school year has the decided advantage of finding the most people at home with the least follow-up.

1. Survey mailings

Survey mailings can be used for conducting the census. The survey can be a questionnaire, form or postcard and can be mailed to private schools, institutions and to all households in the locality. The survey that is mailed should provide all appropriate information about the census such as the purpose, identification, instructions, return policy and include the appropriate items to obtain the census count.

2. In-School form

To obtain a count of persons who attend the public schools, an in-school form can be used. Existing data on students maintained by school divisions can be preprinted and sent to parents for corrections and verification.

3. Enumerators

If enumerators are hired, they should be provided with identification credentials, forms, pencils, maps, and instructions needed for taking the census. The enumerators should be thoroughly familiar with the procedures that they will be required to use such as editing, cross-checking, tabulating, and completion of accounting forms. They should also notify the school census director or his representative of any special problems that they encounter, such as persons who are consistently not at home, persons who

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refuse to provide the necessary information, inability of the enumerator to carry out his responsibilities in the time available, and changes in residence.

Each enumerator may have some means of identification such as an identification card that identifies the person as an official school census enumerator. The enumerator also should carry a letter or memorandum from the division superintendent, which briefly explains the purpose of and authorization for the school census.

All enumerators should receive some training before they go into the field. While this training does not have to be elaborate or extensive, it can be of great help in obtaining a better school census. In most instances, training can be completed in a half-day to a day. Some areas that should be covered in the training session include:

- an explanation of the purpose of the school census and what it means to the locality and to the State;
- safety;
- a review of the State laws pertaining to the school census;
- an explanation of the overall school census organization, as well as the responsibilities assigned to enumerators;
- a detailed review of the forms and instructions for taking the school census;
- an opportunity for the enumerators to make several “practice runs” with emphasis on completing the job on the scene and checking all information before the forms are turned in;
- instruction about the methods and forms required for accounting purposes;
- suggestions to enable enumerators to deal with persons who might not want to furnish information required for the school census and what to do about hazards such as dogs.

E. Tabulation of Census Counts

Information systems and scanning procedures can be used for tabulating the census counts. Also, clerical personnel can assist in the tabulation and should be adequately

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trained for their assignment. This training should include familiarization with: (1) forms and instructions that the enumerators will use; (2) forms from which data will be cross-checked, such as student information systems or pre-census forms; (3) forms and instructions that will be used for tabulation; (4) forms and instructions for preparing summary reports.

F. Follow-up Procedures

Follow-up procedures must be established for homes where occupants were unavailable or where the information was not complete. The follow-up should be considered when the plan for the school census is established. Follow-up procedures can include additional mailers, reminder notices, follow-up calls and return call notification.

Editing Census Data and Retention of Records

Procedures should be established for editing the data from the census forms as a part of the overall school census organization plan. Some editing procedures to be considered include the following:

- A. Completion of Forms – All applicable items on the form should be completed for each entry.
- B. Accuracy of Data – All entries should be edited to ensure accuracy of data.
- C. Cross-Checking Against Other Data – Enumerators' returns should be checked against other available records and data. These records include student information systems and pre-census data (if pre-census was taken). As totals are accumulated they can be checked against pre-census totals, enrollment reports, school membership totals, previous school census data, and U.S. census data. Some other factors that should be considered are changes in the boundaries of the school divisions because of annexation, population changes, children in non-public schools, and children not enrolled in school.

School census summary records must be retained permanently (10 years in original form after which they may be microfilmed). School census enumerator records shall be kept for a period of 3 years from the end of the fiscal year in which the last entry is made or until audited, whichever comes first, after which they may be destroyed.

USING THE ENUMERATION FORM

School divisions may download and print the sample enumeration form on the Department's web site, modify it, or use another form as necessary to meet local needs. Forms may be pre-printed with address information from local sources such as the 911 Emergency System database.

Specific instructions for completing each item on the enumeration form follow.

Item 1, County, City or Town – List the name of your county, city or town.

Item 2, District, Ward, or Other – (optional) **Local school division authorities may modify and use this item to their own advantage by adapting it to fit the local plan for recording addresses.**

Item 3, 4, Names of Parents (), Guardians (), or Other () – List the names in the order prescribed. Check in the parentheses to indicate whether persons listed are parents, guardians, or other.

Item 5, Address of Residence – **Local school division authorities may modify and use this item to their own advantage by adapting it to fit the local plan for recording addresses.**

Item 6, Names of Children – **Local school division authorities may modify and use this item as a unique identifier (i.e., a, b, c, d, etc.) to list all persons in the family ages 5-19 as of December 31, 2008.**

* Item 7, 8, 9, Dates of Birth – Record the date of birth by month, day, and year for each person listed under Item 6.

* Item 10, Age in years on December 31, 2008 – Record the age of each person on December 31, 2008. Age may be determined by the census enumerator from the date of birth, or can be calculated by computer program. **IMPORTANT NOTE: Do not include persons born on or after January 1, 2004 or any persons born on or before December 31, 1988, in the census count reported to the Department of Education.**

<u>If person was born in</u>	<u>He/She is</u>
2003	5
2002	6
2001	7
2000	8
1999	9
1998	10
1997	11

1996	12
1995	13
1994	14
1993	15
1992	16
1991	17
1990	18
1989	19

* **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Either Items 7, 8, 9 (Dates of Birth) **or** Item 10 (Age in years on December 31, 2008) can be used if local school division authorities modify and use items to their own advantage by adapting it to fit the local plan for determining the age of all persons. It is not necessary to record both date of birth and age.

STATE STATUTES RELATING TO THE SCHOOL CENSUS**Article 4****Triennial Census**

§22.1-281. Triennial Census of School Population – Every three years, at a time to be designated by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, a census of all persons residing within each school division who, on or before December 31 immediately following the census, will have reached their fifth birthday but not their twentieth birthday shall be taken on forms furnished by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Such persons who are domiciled in orphanages or eleemosynary institutions or who are dependents living on any federal military or naval reservation or other federal property shall be included in the census for the school division within which the institution or federal military or naval reservation or other federal property is located. Such persons who are confined in state hospitals, state training schools or state training centers for the mentally retarded, each as defined in §37.1-1, or mental institutions, state or federal correctional institutions, or the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind shall be included in the census for the school division within which the parents or guardians of such person or persons legally reside. If the legal residence of the parents or guardians of such person is not ascertainable, such parents or guardians shall be deemed to be legal residents of the school division from which such person was admitted or committed.

§22.1-282. Appointment and Compensation of Persons Taking Census – The census shall be taken by agents appointed by each school board on the recommendation of the division superintendent. Each such agent shall receive as compensation for his services, to be paid out of the school board's funds, an amount to be fixed by the school board appointing him. In the discretion of the school board, a reasonable travel allowance may be allowed such agents.

§22.1-283. Agents to Gather Other Statistics – The agents taking the census shall also, at the time of taking the census, gather statistics relating to the interests of education according to forms furnished by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

§22.1-284. Census Results – The complete results of the census required by §§22.1-281 and 22.1-283 shall be submitted to the school board as soon as practicable. The division superintendent shall transmit such results, together with any other information required or deemed necessary, to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

§22.1-285. Board May Require Special Census – The Board of Education is authorized to require a special statewide census at anytime it deems such census necessary for the equitable distribution of state school funds.

§22.1-286. Duty of Board to see that Census is Taken – It shall be the duty of each school board to see that the census required by the provisions of this article is taken at the proper time and in the proper manner.